



CITY COUNCIL

Evidentiary Hearing

**HARB Appeal Hearing
118 S 5th Street
Monday, December 5, 2011
Council Chambers
5:00 p.m.**

The City of Reading Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) holds monthly hearings to consider approving Certificates of Appropriateness for exterior property improvements for properties located within the City's four (4) historic districts. Applicants have the ability to appeal the decision of the HARB to the City of Reading City Council. This evidentiary hearing is was scheduled at the request of the owner of 118 S 5th Street, who is appealing the HARB's denial of replacement windows.

I. Testimony from Applicant (No more than 10 minutes)

During the hearing process, applicants are cautioned not to address the Administrative staff present but to make their presentation directly to City Council. The applicant may ask the President of Council or the Hearing Master to relay a question to Administrative staff.

118 S. 5th St., Edward & Heather Hanna, Owners

Composite Index Rating: 74

Review proposal for the installation of 8 composite material replacement windows, to be tan in color, at the second and third floor front façade, installation of aluminum capping.

Council's Cross Examination

II. Testimony from City Staff (No more than 10 minutes)

- **Historic Specialist**

III. Other Testimony and Evidence

IV. Rebuttal by Applicant (No more than 5 minutes)

V. Public Comment (No More than 10 minutes)

VI. Announcement of expected date of decision

City Council will render a decision by adopting resolution at the December 27th
Regular Meeting of Council.

VII. Adjourn

**THE READING BOARD OF HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW
MEETING, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2011**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairperson Aaron Booth, who noted the presence of a quorum.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Aaron Booth, Chairperson
Cynthia LaSota, Vice-Chairperson
Frank L. Gilyard, Secretary
Tadd Casner
Laura James
O. Christopher Miller
Peter Sutliff
Allen Webster

STAFF PRESENT

Amy W. Johnson

OTHERS PRESENT

Bryan Jones, 544 Penn St.
Phillip Rollman, 359 Penn St.
Xiomara A. Rodriguez, 242. 5th St.
Isaias Gaspar, 339 S. 5th St.
Bill Vitale, 100 S. 7th St.
Rich Sullivan, 100 S. 7th St.
Mike Hartley, 100 S. 7th St.
Heather Hanna, 118 S. 5th St.
Carmen Cruz, 101 S. 6th St.
Denton Conner, 101 S. 6th St.
Lissett Gonzalez, 101 S. 6th St.
Doug Fell, 432 Windsor St.
Dia Fell, 432 Windsor St.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Ms. LaSota indicated that he will abstain from Item #8.

ITEM #8

**118 South Fifth Street
Edward P. Hanna, Owner**

**FACTS CONCERNING HISTORICAL AND
ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE**

Built circa 1840 by Nicholas Van Reed Hunter, this structure is one of Reading's few examples of the Greek Revival style. The historical integrity of this three story home remains substantially intact and features a painted brick façade with stone at the lower, basement level, area, a simple wood cornice at the third floor roofline, wood windows with simple lintels, and a bay window with garland detailing at the second floor. The structure's distinguished entry features a four panel wood door with a wood surround consisting of a Classical style entablature and pilasters which feature egg-and-dart molding. The building received a site quality rating of 74 and is a significant contributing site in the Callowhill Historic District.

PROPOSED SCOPE OF WORK

The owner proposes the installation of eight composite material replacement windows, to be tan in color, at the second and third floor front façade, and the installation of aluminum capping to surround the proposed replacement windows.

REASONS OF APPLICANT FOR PURSUING PROPOSED SCOPE OF WORK

The existing windows on the front façade are in disrepair and the owner would like to replace them with energy efficient and maintenance free windows.

FINDINGS OF THE BOARD

Ms. Johnson presented samples of the proposed window material to the Board. Heather Hanna explained the project to the Board stating that she is proposing to install "Renewal by Andersen" replacement windows in the color "Sandtone". The windows are made of a composite material called Fibrex which consists of reclaimed wood fiber mixed with a polymer. Ms. Hanna explained that she wanted to use a reputable company which uses top of the line materials and is known for their quality.

Ms. Hanna stated that because the middle window in the bay window is very large, it would consist of a fixed window that would mimic the double hung configuration. Ms. Hanna stated that the window contractor explained to her that historically, the center window in the bay window would have been a picture window and not double hung. Ms. Hanna stated that the proposed composite material is much stronger than wood and the vinyl material typically used for replacement windows.

Mr. Webster inquired as to whether the windows on each end of the bay window would have been curved originally. Ms. Johnson replied that yes, the windows would have had curved glass to mimic the curve of the bay window. Ms. Hanna stated that she would like to install curved windows in the bay and has looked for someone to install curved glass for two years but has not been able to find a contractor that can do the work. Ms. Hanna stated that the bay window has not had curved windows for a very long time. Ms. Hanna stated that water is coming directly into the home through the bay window every time it rains and therefore she has major plaster and wood damage in the home. Ms. Hanna stated that she is requesting the aluminum capping because of the large amount of deteriorated wood that surrounds the existing windows.

Mr. Webster stated that the proposed windows should be in the same configuration as the existing windows and does not recommend that the center window in the bay become a picture window. Mr. Webster stated that since the bay window does not currently have curved glass in it, she will not be required to replace it.

Mr. Webster inquired as to whether the existing windows on the front façade are made of wood. Ms. Hanna replied that yes, the existing windows are made of wood. Mr. Webster inquired as to the state of deterioration of the windows. Ms. Hanna replied that the windows are extremely deteriorated explained that there are areas where a person can see between the window sash and the glass. Ms. Hanna stated that based on her experience with her family's window cleaning business, wood nor vinyl windows in the size found in her home will last as long as windows made out of a composite material. Mr. Webster inquired as to whether the third floor windows were badly deteriorated. Ms. Hanna replied that the third floor windows are not as badly deteriorated as the second floor windows but wanted to replace them for energy efficiency. Ms. Hanna stated that eventually she would like to replace the first floor wood windows as well.

Mr. Booth suggested that the owner contact a contractor who would work to acquire the appropriate windows as opposed to working directly with a window manufacturer. Mr. Booth stated that the Board can help in talking with contractors. Ms. Hanna stated that she has called many contractors but they will not call her back or make a site visit to look at the windows nor does she want to wait any longer to install replacement windows.

Mr. Webster stated that according to the HARB Window Policy, since the existing windows are made of wood, the replacement windows must be made of wood. Mr. Webster further stated that any repairable windows should be repaired in kind. Ms. James concurred. Ms. Hanna stated that the existing wood windows are not repairable and again stated that she has wind and water coming into the home. Ms. Hanna stated that she doesn't understand the problem with installing the most expensive windows on the market which will be in a color that is historically appropriate. Ms. Hanna stated that she feels the Board does not understand her issues.

Ms. James and the Board explained that they understand Ms. Hanna's plight as they own historic older homes of their own and have to deal with the same issues. Ms. Hanna stated that she has an appointment set up for next week for windows to be installed on her house so that the elements no longer come into her home. Mr. Booth stated that there are temporary measures that the Board could approve to keep the elements out of her home until the windows are replaced. Mr. Booth stated that the Secretary of the Interior's Standards require the Board to administrate the replacement of the wood windows with wood windows.

Ms. Hanna expressed her frustration and disappointment with the Board and the review process when she is willing to preserve her home and she's done all she can to maintain it. Ms. Hanna noted that there are other vinyl replacement windows located in the District. The Board noted that vinyl windows may have been installed illegally or before the Window Policy was updated in November, 2010. Ms. Hanna stated that last year when she spoke with Ms. Johnson about her project, the Board had a policy of approving vinyl windows. Ms. Hanna stated that Ms. Johnson gave her the impression that installing windows made of a composite material would not be a problem. Ms. Johnson stated that she explained to Ms. Hanna that the Board had updated the Window Policy and explained the changes that were made. Ms. Johnson apologized for any miscommunication but she did not intentionally mean to give that impression.

Mr. Sutliff inquired as to whether Ms. Hanna's contractor could install wood windows. Ms. Hanna explained that she decided to install windows made of a composite material because of the large size of the windows on the building and that she feels the composite material will last longer than wood.

Mr. Webster noted the historical integrity of Ms. Hanna's home and encouraged her to replace the existing windows in wood.

Mr. Sutliff explained to Ms. Hanna that she has an option to appeal the decision of the Board to City Council if she wishes. Ms. Hanna stated that she will be appealing the HARB decision.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE BOARD

That a Certificate of Appropriateness **NOT** be issued to Heather Hanna, applicant for 118 South Fifth Street, for the installation and capping in aluminum of eight composite material replacement windows, to be tan in color, at the second and third floor front façade due to the fact that the proposed work does not meet the guidelines of the HARB Window Policy nor the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings. A motion was made by Ms. James

and seconded by Mr. Webster. The vote was taken with one abstention by Ms. LaSota and the remainder of the Board all in favor (7-0).

RESOLUTION NO. 109-11

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED by the Reading Historical Architectural Review Board:

“That a Certificate of Appropriateness **NOT** be issued to Heather Hanna, applicant for 118 South Fifth Street, for the installation and capping in aluminum of eight composite material replacement windows, to be tan in color, at the second and third floor front façade due to the fact that the proposed work does not meet the guidelines of the HARB Window Policy nor the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings.”

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the resolution adopted by the Reading Historical Architectural Review Board at the meeting held on November 15, 2011.

AMY WOLDT JOHNSON
Historic Preservation Specialist